

\$5.00

HAWK & WHIP POOR- WILL

poems of man & nature

NEW SERIES VOLUME TWO / NUMBER TWO



WINTER
2012

HAWK & WHIPPOORWILL

Winter 2012 // Volume 2, Number 2 // ISSN 1938-2618

Making Fire	William Keener	3
Leaving Amsterdam	Chris Canter	4
A Natural Violence	D. A. Lockhart	5
Mt. Auburn Cemetery	Walter Smelt	6
Three on March	Sandra Kohler	6
Rebirthing	J. Sackett, Jr.	8
On Top of the News	Matthew Kelsey	9
Ode to Rialto	"	10
Frost Heave	"	11
Safehouse	Simmons B. Buntin	13
Sisters	H. D. Brown	15
The Poet Issa and His Lost Children	Satnrose	16
Resurrection Bay, Alaska	William Neumire	17
Catamount	Kelly Madigan Erlandson	18
May That Light be My Authority	"	20
New & Recommended Reading	Zachary Bos	22
Bombus sp., <i>illustration after a bronze by Nancy Webb</i>		23

© 2012. All rights reserved by respective contributors and editors. Texts may not be reproduced other than for personal or academic use without written permission of the author or editor. Reviewers are encouraged to excerpt when reviewing. For permissions and subscription information, contact the editors via the Boston Poetry Union, PO Box 15274, Boston, Massachusetts (02215). Submissions and inquiries may be mailed to the editors at the same address, or sent by email to hawk.and.whippoorwill@gmail.com. For a complete masthead and contributor biographies, please visit www.penandnavil.com/hw.

Hawk & Whippoorwill is a publication of PEN & ANVIL PRESS. The original *H&W* was edited by August Derleth between 1960-3; this "new series" carries on the title with the permission of April Derleth of Arkham House. This issue was edited by Zachary Bos, with the assistance of Jenna Dee and Robert Morris. On our cover: dustjacket art by Carton Moore-Park from a 1925 edition of *Brown Wolf, and Other Jack London Stories*, published by Macmillan.

WILLIAM KEENER

Making Fire

The man who talks to shamans,
who flies all night in his dreams,
finds a small bird on the ground,

a kinglet killed when it flew into
the windows of the classroom
where he teaches. He carries it

inside to share the secret that
he holds. Close enough to kiss
the bird, he parts the feathers

of its ashen head with his breath
—a ruby flash! and the crown
ignites, a hidden flame to start

the tiny heart, heat the muscles
of the olive-green wings until
it rises up the shaft of skylight

through a pane of frosted glass
into blue above, a lost bird
flying in the cradle of his hands.

CHRIS CANTER

Leaving Amsterdam

Our city bikes took us by surprise into a world
of guileless cows, hogweed and horizon spires.
We knew six birds by name; they'd know us better.
A faithful shed knows the initials we left.

Seeds blew by with the lessons of primary school,
where people and politics were out of focus.
Toads' lives were big for the first and last time,
polecats and stoats scurried about our pages.

A drizzle rushed us like ducks into a village.
We nibbled our lunch in a church's cold grip.
A goat jumped a ditch to graze in the churchyard.
"I knew you'd remember," said somebody's grave.

Sheer wonder, we found, is never a first:
it lies low and returns in a flurry of forms.

D. A. LOCKHART

A Natural Violence

The jack pine mangled Tom Thomson
and returned to rest
atop the granite of shield
as waterline was broken
by flesh puffed canvas.
The lake rings out in aftershocks,
crests of cold flesh
hitting the empty shell of wood.
The canoe top heavy
with oil paints, canvas, fishing line.
The pine seesaws.
Winds descending from James Bay,
jolt scraggeled limbs.
A half rendered pine
rests atop a board
tinted with oils.
The pine groans.
The wind relents.
The oily smears
shadowing the pine
remain firm
despite the waves.
And the pine lunges
at high summer clouds
as the wind mounts again,
slamming a rigoured artist
into the side
of a red canoe.

WALTER SMELT

Mt. Auburn Cemetery

The old family names of Boston,
that were like mansions to their keepers,
have been shed on the short trip
across the river to Mt. Auburn St.
Their polished letters are cut
in statues and stones, but a vertical
stone is a poor roof, and the weather
reaches the Lowells from all around
now that they summer and winter
in the same place. They are rolling
in the slow tides of the soil.

SANDRA KOHLER

Three on March

i.

White and lit and lyric the world seems not
March but Janus, pure cold. Spring is absolute
in its offer: take what I have however I give it.
Mirage, it disappears without warning
like the light on the creek brilliant against
the colder white of snow binding fields,
coating streets and alleys, leaving stillness
everywhere, but in the creek white ripples.

ii.

The starlings appear, as always, at winter's cold lag end when the suet cage put out for the woodpecker's almost empty. He comes alone, his large head cocked, shy, gentle. The starlings – in flurries, bursts, with their stiletto beaks, mean sleek gloss – attack the cage, contort themselves around it to reach a crumb. March vision of commonplace evil: an afternoon of starlings.

iii.

Columns of ice falling from the building next door glisten among the dark branches of the mulberry in the garden, a tree of ice shadowing the tree of black boughs. March is the month I feel inadequate to: its cold brilliance, its harsh demands which weigh like loss. Each dawning, despite the ice, its rigid grip, insists: wake, rise, grow.

J. SACKETT, JR.

Rebirthing

A bird swoops sideways, no
song, only the confidence exerted
from his wings. Perching atop
a lamppost, aging orange
like a retiring sun, he burns
his twiggy legs listening
for his reciprocated dreams.
The cobalt mountains, ghostly,
are ringed by a soft white
stripe. In morning, the light
turns into the creamy peach
of navel. Night departs
with the cockroach's screech.
Cacti flex green, spit-shine
their needles. Introduction of dawn;
wind whipping in saffron, the earth-
a burnt tangerine, is dusted clean.

MATTHEW KELSEY

On Top of the News

This morning, after a quake
in Chile's Maule region thrust
eight-foot waves deep into the sky,
aftershocks bottle-stopped progress.

The tremors reached beaches in Hawai'i,
Tasmania, and Ventura, California. Then,

in a master stroke of triviality,
or maybe, just, I hope, of awe,
the US government extended its watch

to Antarctica. Imagine the sallow
iceblink sky, black lacquer waves,
and the flights of ice all crashing
together to sea, with no one there
to account for the damage.

The free blocks of ice would swirl
like loosened vowels past the swollen tongue
of water, the mouth of the sea explaining the world
beyond language, beyond all measurement, so that

what we're left with is the task
of creating misdirection, of forming
a storm of words to believe in
other than death, speech, recover.

Ode to Rialto

Fossils of trees are tossed along the black
gravel coast, the off-white teeth of roots

smiling everywhere, almost as bright
as the fog-light of noontime moons, or the lime

stones sticking through the skin of the sand
like neon bones. The nacre shells smell of salt,

are swollen, half-shut, carved from the eyes of beasts
who threw trees as if they were javelins

or fish stripped of meat and left as tall
stakes at the edge of the beach.

Wind whips water to froth, pools of foam
collect, cool off, and quiver along the shore.

This continues while we sleep: the ocean
wind unhinges waves and the waves

lick with a brine that changes boundary lines.

Frost Heave

Small stones crown the soil. Mayapple, brown
seeds of buttonbush crushed and the primrose

crimped in the yard beside the drive. Preparing to leave,
I think of you, mother, voice through which plants

catch as you recite them like an apology—
false violet, choke cherry, trembling aspen, vetch. Everything

seems vulnerable in the slush, the hobblebush,
the mess of seasons turning, as if sense

can be made from this place when put behind us, this
town we call a city, the Mohican cave long shut down,

and the falls we named ourselves after
dammed up and quiet at the foot of the mill.

Home is where the start is, only. I trust weeds
to overgrow their beds when I'm gone. I trust

in the end of things. Lovely for our names, if not
for some design, we will lose and lose again, then

become something unbecoming, unmoving, a list.
We will swear by the garden we lie beneath.

Clots of hosta, creepers, blue flags left
to surrender, crutch of silver maple, pinched

nerves of rhododendrons, mulch turned up
by the rain that starts like an engine and hisses

as it falls. Or, simply, it is raining. I am still
trying to leave. There is no perfect metaphor

for this, no word to wave off with.
No one means go when they say it.

SIMMONS B. BUNTIN

Safehouse

Against the moon, bruised
 in ruddy eclipse,
 I find the thorn tree's nest

abandoned, a tangle
 of bluestem & sage.
 Last spring the mourning

doves fled the battered roost,
 the brood lost
 early, shells weathered

to white dust. New seekers
 now, as sparrows tease
 the bent leaves & mottled

wrens weave moonlight
 to madness in their quick
 & raucous wit.

The laughter calls
 the great-horned owl,
 cast like a gargoyle

on the horizon of rooftop—
 eyes red as the shadowed
 moon, as the earth's own

waning. A low cry
 & the songbirds drop
 to cold silence,

the nest cracked open
 to the ravenous night—
 the safehouse sold.

H. D. BROWN

Sisters

These ancient thin and towering twisted sister oaks
fling their spindly arms around each other
in a timely dance

the heavy winds of winter storms
have pruned away the dead wood
and the asymmetrical branches
that left them plump and awkward
in their teenaged years

have rotted back into the roots at their feet
at one hundred and fifty
they are young women now
their shadows fall

as long skirts at their ankles
their arms uplifted to the sun
that twirls above their heavenly heads
their intertwined arms spin
a circle around the sun

as we spin along together
to the tune we hear if we listen
carefully in quiet moments alone
and moments of hilarity together.

SATNROSE

The Poet Issa and His Lost Children

Issa all night sat and looked out at the black sand and the illusion of
fog around the mountain filled his head like smoky dreams where the
daughter of his mind was hidden in the cloud under the volcano and
in the morning he stood on the beach and watched the tide begin the
next month waiting for the snow where the rain did not fall freezing
he went out walking with the dawn every morning which dissolved
the fragile sun and he told himself he thought he could not remember
exactly what she looked like and he pretended he had forgotten just
how many shades of green and gold the forests under Fuji could turn

WILLIAM NEUMIRE

Resurrection Bay, Alaska

The first sign of snowfall drizzles its way
to the center of a net of fish,
above which tarp-gray heavens hide
the fisherman from the universe beyond
his iron theater. On the deck
he sorts the fish into greater and lesser
meals. What is the collective
noun for a deck full of dead fish?
He raises the silver in his two palms
and knows there will be more snow.

Inside, there hangs a picture
of his tenderly Philistine father
crouching in a storm one bad year
to save a bird. It was sick,
but in the dog-minded world of moment
he didn't think about the consequences
of kindness. He just knew every fallen thing
deserves a warm hand.

Catamount

She came to the party
as a lion, and promptly killed
the three young women dressed
as Playboy bunnies. Because her tongue
was specialized for scraping meat
from bone, she stripped their bodies
to ribbons. She came to

the party as a lion and barefoot,
her retractable claws absent
from her prints. She came to the party
although it was against her nature,
and asked them to turn down
the lights. Men commented
to one another on the contracted
vertical slits in her eyes.

She wore a cinnamon coat
that she did not remove. She came
to the party as a lion and no one was amused
when she marked the edges of the room.
One flash of her carnassial teeth
stemmed the outcry.

When the conversation bore
cornered her, she leapt straight up
and balanced on the china hutch.
By the end of the night,
oblivious to the drama, she denned
in the space beneath the desk, and guests
held their coats above their heads
as they backed slowly out to the street.

May That Light Be My Authority

after Deborah Shore

I have pledged and knelt
and I have raised my hands
above my head

washed myself in blood
and allowed the wafer to dissolve
upon my tongue.

I have slept all night on an island
underneath the heron rookery,

tied prayers
made of colored paper
to the limbs of trees
and filled tablets
with gratitude's documentation.

I have been to the powwow
and worn a medicine bag
stout with quartz.

I have participated
in the services of scotch
and tobacco

and one night in Wyoming
I drove with no headlamps.

I have dragged
a dead badger from the water
and I have told lies.

Following my own breath

leads me down a staircase
in an apartment building
where I once lived.

I watched the wrecker cave
in the sides on the day
they took it down,

but still in meditation
I count backwards from ten
as I go down those stairs—

five counts to the landing
and turn. One time the door
at the bottom opened

onto a dark field, plowed.
In the distance a bonfire.

WRITTEN/COMPILED BY ZACHARY BOS

Some New & Recommended Reading

The Elephant Whisperer: My Life with the Herd in the African Wild by Lawrence Anthony, from St. Martin's Griffin (2012). \$16.99. Nonfiction first-person account of Lawrence Anthony's attempt to take in a herd of "rogue" elephants to his game reserve in Zululand.

H&W contributor Ryan Bayless writes: "I would advise readers looking for nature-themed poetry to look for David Young's recent collection, *Field of Light and Shadow: Selected and New Poems*." Knopf, 2011: \$15.95.

Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World by Mark Kurlansky, from Penguin (1998). \$15.00. Winner of the 1999 James Beard Award, a biography of the cod and the importance it has played in world history.

H&W contributor Caleb Klaces: "Peter Reading's book of climate change poems, *-273.15*, is brilliant." Bloodaxe, 2006: \$12.95.

Wicked Plants: The Weed That Killed Lincoln's Mother and Other Botanical Atrocities by Amy Stewart, from Algonquin Books (2009). \$18.95. An A-to-Z compendium of plants that poison, maim or kill. Includes visual companions.

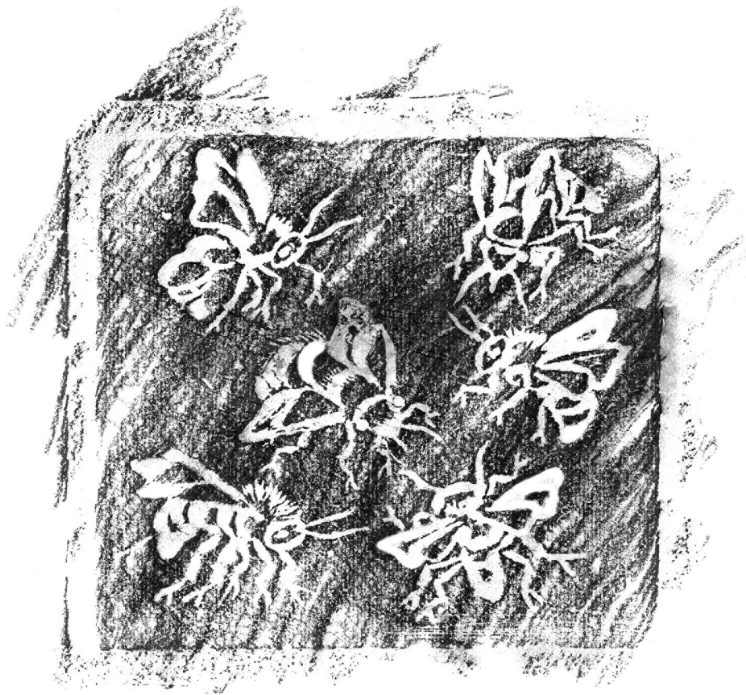
American Canopy: Trees, Forests, and the Making of a Nation by Eric Rutkow, from Scribner (2012). \$29.00. Situates forest ecology in American history.

H&W contributor Colleen S. Harris writes: "My recommendation is Jeanie Thompson's *The Seasons Bear Us*. Jeanie weaves the American South and nature into her work, creating broad, beautiful tapestries against which her language soars. I highly recommend all of her work, with this book being her latest." River City Publishing, 2009: \$15.49.

Chomp by Carl Hiaasen, from Knopf Books (2012). \$16.99. Zany young adult novel about a father and son who live in a zoo and take jobs on a reality television show involving wild animals.

America's Other Audubon by Joy M. Kiser, from Princeton Architectural Press (2012). \$45.00. The true story of Genevieve Jones' efforts to create her book, *Illustrations of the Nests and Eggs of Birds of Ohio*. The Audubon would not accept her work, so her family set out to produce the costly project themselves. Sold in subscriptions, her illustrations were so well-praised that Rutherford B. Hayes and Theodore Roosevelt added their names to the subscription list.

Find more recommendations online at www.penandanvil.com/hw/4.



*“Now I am morning glad, all is pregnant
outside me. I face the rabbit’s victorious ears, the
bumblebee, and mushrooms on a fallen limb.”*

– from “Alleys” by Sandra McPherson, in *Patron Happiness* (Ecco, 1983)

The MBTA agent was bewildered to find members of our editorial staff sprawled on the floor of the Alewife station on the Red Line, using paper and graphite pencils to make rubbings of low-relief bronze tiles created by local artist Nancy Webb. The tiles had been set into the station’s mezzanine floor in 1981 as part of the T’s “Arts on the Line” initiative. Each features one of a dozen different species of plant or animal indigenous to the marsh-and-meadow Alewife reservation, the largest intact wetlands in Cambridge. The image here—depicting a species of bumblebee, in the *Bombus* genus—began as one of these rubbings, before being scanned and cleaned-up in photo-editing software. We thank Ms. Webb for her kind permission to publish these images in print and online. Readers can learn more about her work at www.nancywebbstudio.com.

In this issue:

H. D. BROWN

SIMMONS B. BUNTIN

CHRIS CANTER

KELLY MADIGAN ERLANDSON

WILLIAM KEENER

MATTHEW KELSEY

SANDRA KOHLER

D. A. LOCKHART

WILLIAM NEUMIRE

J. SACKET, JR.

SATNROSE

WALTER SMELT

OUTSIDE THE
WHIPPOORWILLS
BEGAN TO CALL,
A LITTLE WIND
TOOK RISE OUT
OF THE WEST,
THE MOON AND
THE PROMISE OF
THE EVENING
VANISHED
UNDER THE
EARTH'S BLACK
RIM, AND THE
DARKNESS
CLOSED IN.

.....
August Derleth, *The Shadow in the Glass*



THE PEN & ANVIL PRESS

c/o Boston Poetry Union

PO BOX 15274

Boston, Massachusetts 02216

www.penandanvil.com/hw

ISSN 1938-2618

